

Message Text

PAGE 01 SAIGON 05212 300053 Z

11

ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SS-14 INR-10 PA-01 PRS-01 PM-03 RSC-01

RSR-01 /045 W

----- 058967

R 291401 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9370

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5212

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP VS

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT THIEU' S VISIT TO THE US: PUBLIC AFFAIRS
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE VIEWS OF TWO TDY FSO' S ASSIGNED TO
THE CONSULATE GENERAL AT BIEN HOA FORWARDED BY CONGEN WALKINSHAW.
LIKE MR. WALKINSHAW, WE DO NOT AGREE WITH ALL THE VIEWS
EXPRESSED BUT BELIEVE THEY SHOULD BE SENT TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR ITS
CONSIDERATION.

QUOTE

1. THIS CABLE TRANSMITS THE INDEPENDENT VIEWS OF TWO TDY
VIETNAMESE- LANGUAGE FSOS, LARS HYDLE AND J. A. ALLITTO OF
MY STAFF, ON US PUBLIC AFFAIRS STRATEGY DURING PRESIDENT THIEU' S
VISIT TO THE US AND THEREAFTER. BETWEEN THEM, HYDLE AND ALLITTO
HAVE 10 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN AND ON VIET- NAM. ALTHOUGH I
AM NOT IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT WITH ITS CONTENTS, I AM ASKING
THAT THIS CABLE BE RE- TRANSMITTED TO WASHINGTON AND GIVEN THE
NORMAL DISTRIBUTION FOR MESSAGES ON THIS SUBJECT WITHIN THE
DEPARTMENT AND THE NSC.

2. SUMMARY: WE RECOMMEND THAT DURING AND AFTER THIEU' S VISIT
TO US, US OFFICIALS IN THEIR PUBLIC STATEMENTS:

A. AVOID FURTHER CLAIMS THAT PARIS AGREEMENT HAS BROUGHT
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAIGON 05212 300053 Z

" PEACE WITH HONOR", IN VIEW OF WIDESPREAD AND SYSTEMATIC
COMMUNIST CEASE- FIRE VIOLATIONS AND COMMUNIST- RENDERED IMPOTENCE

OF JMC AND ICCS;

B. LIMIT EXCESSIVE PERSONAL PRAISE OF PRESIDENT THIEU, BECAUSE OF PROBABLE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE REACTION IN RVN INTERNAL POLITICS;

C. EMPHASIZE RVN SELF- DEFENSE STRENGTH RATHER THAN POSSIBLE DIRECT US RETALIATION AS BEST COUNTER TO ENEMY CEASE- FIRE VIOLATIONS, BECAUSE RVN STRENGTH IS IN LONG RUN MOST DEBILITATING TO COMMUNIST HOPES OF CONQUEST OF RVN. END OF SUMMARY.

3. EARLY CLAIMS BY HIGH UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT (USG) OFFICIALS THAT PARIS AGREEMENT HAD BROUGHT " PEACE WITH HONOR" IN VIET- NAM, AND THAT WE WERE CONFIDENT THE AGREEMENT WOULD ESSENTIALLY BE COMPLIED WITH, ARE SOUNDING INCREASINGLY HOLLOW IN LIGHT OF SYSTEMATIC VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST VIOLATIONS OF CEASE- FIRE, AND COMMUNIST- RENDERED IMPOTENCE OF JMC AND ICCS IN SUPERVISING CEASE- FIRE. WE RECOGNIZE THAT EARLY SHOW OF USG PESSIMISM COULD HAVE LED TO EVEN MORE VIOLATIONS AND COULD HAVE LED CANADIANS TO LEAVE ICCS, AND THAT RECENT HIGH USG STATEMENTS HAVE RECOGNIZED MORE CLEARLY THE PROBLEM OF COMMUNIST NON- COMPLIANCE. WE ALSO REGARD THE AGREEMENT AS AN HONORABLE ONE FOR THE US BECAUSE IT PROVIDES FOR THE RETURN OF OUR PRISONERS AND FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF OUR TROOPS, GIVES THE REPUBLIC OF VIET- NAM (RVN) A FIGHTING CHANCE TO DEFEND SELF AGAINST COMMUNIST AGGRESSION, AND PROVIDES A REASONABLE BASIS FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION IN VIET- NAM IF IMPLEMENTED. BUT IT CANNOT BRING PEACE, AND WE BELIEVE THAT TOO GREAT A CONTRAST BETWEEN OFFICIAL CLAIMS FOR AGREEMENT AND ACTUAL EVENTS IN VIET- NAM, RISKS OPENING OF CREDIBILITY GAP THAT COULD LEAD VIETNAMESE TO BELIEVE WE ARE BLIND TO REAL SITUATION OR DELIBERATELY LYING ABOUT IT IN ORDER TO AVOID FACING UP TO REALITY AND DRAWING PROPER POLICY CONCLUSIONS. IT COULD ALSO MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO GET AMERICAN PEOPLE AND CONGRESS TO SUPPORT MEASURES WE MAY DEEM NECESSARY TO INDUCE COMPLIANCE WITH AGREEMENT. THEREFORE WE HOPE THAT RECENT DEESCALATION IN OFFICIAL OPTIMISM ABOUT AGREEMENT WILL CONTINUE DURING AND AFTER THIEU VISIT.

4. EXCESSIVE PRAISE OF PRESIDENT THIEU BY HIGH- RANKING USG OFFICIALS HAS, WE BELIEVE, COUNTERPRODUCTIVE EFFECT IN RVN INTERNAL POLITICS. AMERICAN DISCOVERY IN THIEU OF STERLING QUALITIES NOT PREVIOUSLY SUSPECTED BY HIS COMPATRIOTS TENDS TO PROVOKE LAUGHTER
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAIGON 05212 300053 Z

AMONG VIETNAMESE. PAST STATEMENTS ABOUT RVN LEADERS, AS 1961 CHARACTERIZATION OF NGO DINH DIEM AS " THE WINSTON CHURCHILL OF ASIA", HAVE COME TO SOUND RIDICULOUS WITHIN VERY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME. EXCESSIVE PRAISE OF PRESIDENT THIEU SOUNDS TO VIETNAMESE LIKE USG OFFICIAL PREFERENCE FOR HIM AGAINST HIS NON- COMMUNIST RIVALS, TACIT BLANKET ENDORSEMENT OF HIS PERFORMANCE AS PRESIDENT, INTERVENTION IN VIETNAMESE INTERNAL AFFAIRS, WHICH WE ARE PLEDGED BY PARIS AGREEMENT NOT TO DO, AND OVERRELIANCE ON THIEU THE MAN RATHER THAN ON

CONSTITUTION OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONS ESTABLISHED UNDER IT. IN OUR EXPERIENCE MOST VIETNAMESE DO NOT SHARE HIGH OPINION OF THIEU OFTEN EXPRESSED BY US OFFICIALS. THE MOST THEY SAY FOR HIM IS THAT HE IS HEAD OF GOVERNMENT THAT THEY PREFER TO COMMUNISTS. WE DOUBT THAT IN TRULY HONEST PEACETIME ELECTION HE WOULD ESCAPE POPULAR REPUDIATION THAT HAS OVERTAKEN MUCH GREATER WAR LEADERS SUCH AS CHURCHILL AND DE GAULLE. EXCESSIVE PRAISE OF THIEU THUS LEAVES IMPRESSION THAT WE THINK MORE OF HIM THAN HIS OWN PEOPLE DO. IF IT MAKES HIM FEEL OVERLY SECURE ABOUT PERSONAL USG SUPPORT, HE THEREBY FEELS LESS COMPELLED TO TRY TO BROADEN POLITICAL BASE AMONG OWN PEOPLE, AND MIGHT WELL CLAMP DOWN FURTHER ON HIS POLITICAL OPPONENTS, AS NGUYEN CAO KY, FRESH FROM PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S HONOLULU EMBRACE IN MARCH 1966, DID BY FIRING LT. GENERAL NGUYEN CHANH THI AS MILITARY REGION 1 COMMANDING GENERAL, WHICH TRIGGERED BUDDHIST STRUGGLE; OR AS THIEU HIMSELF, AFTER JULY 1969 SUMMIT MEETING, DID BY DISREGARDING US URGING THAT HE BROADEN POLITICAL BASE OF HIS CABINET AND APPOINTED INSTEAD A GROUP OF "TECHNICIANS" WITH A GENERAL AS PRIME MINISTER. BECAUSE OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS, AND ALTHOUGH WE REALIZE THAT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF HYPERBOLE IS PART OF PROTOCOL DURING SUCH OFFICIAL VISITS, WE URGE RESTRAINT IN COMMENTS BY USG OFFICIALS ON PERSONAL QUALITIES OF PRESIDENT THIEU.

5. IN DISCUSSING WHAT USG WOULD DO IN FACE OF MASSIVE COMMUNIST MILITARY VIOLATION OF AGREEMENT, WE RECOMMEND EMPHASIS ON MILITARY, ECONOMIC, AND DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT WE WOULD GIVE TO RVN SELF- DEFENSE EFFORTS, RATHER THAN ON POSSIBLE DIRECT US MILITARY RETALIATION AGAINST COMMUNISTS. WE FULLY AGREE, OF COURSE, THAT US CANNOT STAND IDLY BY IN FACE OF MASSIVE COMMUNIST VIOLATION, AND WE HAVE SEEN THAT SWIFT AND POWERFUL US MILITARY STRIKE CAN HAVE DECISIVE SHORT- TERM IMPACT ON

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SAIGON 05212 300053 Z

DECISIONS OF DRV LEADERSHIP. BUT IN LONG RUN, DRV LEADERS CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT RVN IS PAPER TIGER THAT WOULD COLLAPSE WITHOUT DIRECT US INTERVENTION, AND THAT US ULTIMATELY CANNOT REMAIN AS DIRECTLY INTERESTED AS THEY IN POLITICAL FUTURE OF INDOCHINA. BY SAME TOKEN, NON- COMMUNIST VIETNAMESE HAVE ALWAYS PREFERRED TO LET US FIGHT FOR THEM SO LONG AS WE HAVE BEEN WILLING, BUT HAVE RISEN TO THE OCCASION -- AS IN VIETNAMIZATION PROGRAM -- WHEN THEY HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO DO IT THEMSELVES. THEREFORE, EFFECTIVE RVN SELF- DEFENSE EFFORT, WITH US SUPPORT OF A KIND SUSTAINABLE IN FACE OF US DOMESTIC CRITICS, IS IN LONG RUN BEST WAY TO ENCOURAGE RVN AND DISCOURAGE DRV/ PRG ABOUT LONG- TERM PROSPECTS OF COMMUNIST MILITARY CONQUEST. RVN SELF- DEFENSE IS ALSO MUCH MORE CONSISTENT WITH SPIRIT OF NIXON DOCTRINE AND WITH SECOND INAUGURAL EMPHASIS ON INCREASED SELF- RELIANCE ON PART OF ALLIES. THUS, WHILE NOT FORECLOSING OPTION OF DIRECT US MILITARY INTERVENTION, PUBLIC

STATEMENTS DURING AND AFTER THIEU VISIT SHOULD, IN OUR VIEW,
EMPHASIZE US MILITARY, ECONOMIC, AND DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT OF
RVN SELF- DEFENSE.

WALKINSHAA

UNQUOTE BUNKER

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 07 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SAIGON05212
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730348/abqcehag.tel
Line Count: 170
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05-Dec-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <28-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 980107
Subject: PRESIDENT THIEU' S VISIT TO THE US: PUBLIC AFFAIRS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS.
TAGS: OVIP, VS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005